

EDUCAUSE

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TO: EDUCAUSE Institutional Member Primary Representatives
FROM: Gregory A Jackson, Vice President
ABOUT: Model CSG/NACUA documents for outsourcing collaboration services

Streamlining the tangled interactions between higher education and major information technology providers has long been stymied by the proposition that institutional technical requirements and procurement processes are too distinct and idiosyncratic for common action.

As you may already know, a few months ago some individuals from the Common Solutions Group (CSG, a small set of research universities that collaborate on many IT issues) and the National Association of College and University Attorneys (NACUA) decided to challenge this proposition by developing, as an experiment, standard language upon which colleges and universities might base their engagements with vendors of outsourced collaboration services, including email. The result is three documents: a model request for proposals (RFP), a model contract, and a summary of issues related to the other two documents.

I am happy to report that EDUCAUSE has joined CSG and NACUA to support this effort. EDUCAUSE expects to play two initial roles as the experiment moves forward: (a) making the documents available and (b) collecting, curating, and disseminating variations on and improvements to the documents as these arise in practice.

Within a few weeks we expect to restructure the documents in a flexible format that can capture and display variation and advice that emerge from institutional experience with them and earlier procurements. Meanwhile, we thought you might find it useful to see the model documents in their pre-flexible form. We have made them available online at <http://www.educause.edu/ModelRFP> (the model RFP), <http://www.educause.edu/ModelContract> (the model contract), and <http://www.educause.edu/ModelIssues> (the related issues). We will redirect these URLs to the more interactive form of the documents once they are available, and will provide a variety of web pages to organize this material and related resources.

Obviously the documents are intended for use by colleges and universities in their thinking about or procurement of cloud-based services, so please treat them accordingly.

Although the current effort is quite narrowly focused on collaboration services, the hope is that it will promote similar efforts in other areas where many institutions seek relatively similar services from major vendors. We welcome your thoughts and involvement in the effort as it evolves. Please address questions and comments, including suggestions for changes in the model documents, to Steve Worona, Director of Policy and Networking Programs, <sworona@educause.edu>.

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